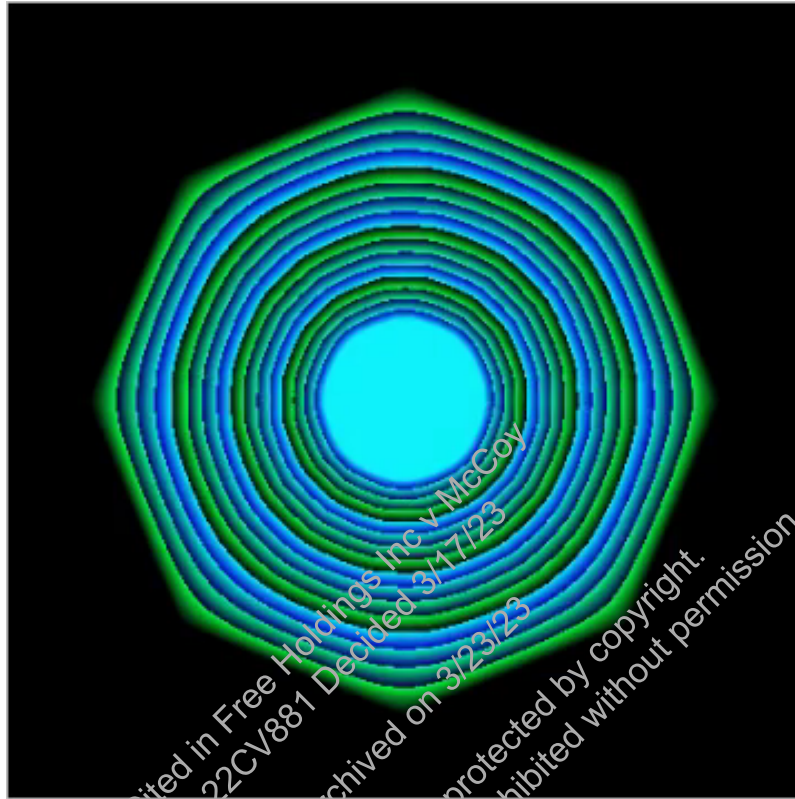


Natively Digital: A Curated NFT Sale

< Lot 2 ▾ >



Kevin McCoy

Quantum

☞ [Cryptocurrency Payments](#)

Lot Closed

June 10, 10:51 AM EDT

Estimate

Upon Request

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#). You can change your preferences at any time. X

Lot Details

☆ Authenticity guaranteed

Description

Owner: Kevin McCoy

Kevin McCoy

b. 1967

Quantum

2014-21

Non-fungible token ERC-721

Token ID: 0

9 mb Tif + file archive with documentation

Originally minted on May 3, 2014 on Namecoin blockchain, and preserved on a token minted on May 28, 2021 by the artist

Calls to <https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmRWhsnDkBWwDozDgDp8Te25kDWiDcfz83zDs7ykR1x995> for supporting documentation

Smart Contract Address: 0xe81a45439f9bc5841202ce4b2049e578f8771d9

Condition Report



Catalogue Note

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated **Privacy Policy**.

In the long timeline of art, there are few works that serve as genesis blocks to their own chain of history. They are seismic forks in direction; forks that usher in new movements that block by block, mint by mint, usher in new art histories. These works close chapters on the art histories that came before, while anchoring a new flowering of human creativity. These prime movers occupy a singular position in art history. They came first. Kevin McCoy's Quantum is such a work. **Minted on 2nd May 2014 21:27:34**, or more precisely Namecoin Block 174923, the NFT era quietly dawned. What a noise it makes today.

Pulsing with colour, a riotously raw beacon to a new era, McCoy minted Quantum - unwittingly placing it within this vaulted pantheon of firsts. Timestamped July 1907, Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.) ushered in the chain of Cubism. December 1917, Malevich's Black Square stands as the genesis block of Abstraction. April 1917, Duchamp timestamps the era of the idea. 2nd May 2014 21:27:34, Quantum stands alone in the precision of its timestamp - immutably, verifiably, trustlessly pure. If blockchain's themselves are a radical recalibration of the concept of time, then the timing of Quantum takes on a pantheonic position within this new art history. For what it is a blockchain, when stripped to its bones, but humanity's latest innovation in the humble art of record keeping. And if blockchains stand as the Gutenberg Bible of the 21st century, then how do we prize the first of these records? In my view, Quantum will always be the most art historically important work in the history of NFTs.

Creation, time, art history and the very idea of blockchains themselves intersect in the ripples of Quantum. It is a work to meditate not just on the genesis of art history's newest chain but on the founding principles that

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated Privacy Policy.

network itself expanding and contracting as the world processes the place they want to give this radical new technology.

“How to picture the moment of creation. A spark, a seed, a particle. We have narratives that describe it as an interval of days or as a cryptic alphabet that divides the earth from the firmament. [Kevin McCoy’s] Quantum takes its place alongside other original icons replacing their aura and gilding with a pulsating luminous heartbeat. To call this a mandala would not be an understatement, since what is a mandala if not a allegory for a universe, its revolutions, breath and winking into being out of nothingness?”

DAVID GREER, 2021.

If Quantum stands tall as a mandala for a new age, what so of its aesthetics? Its pulsating riot of raw colour forebears not just the generative, code-based works that now sit at the cutting edge of the NFT space, but encapsulate in no small part the palette of this new era. Bold, brash, unfiltered, acid green vibrates into cool blue. Flat aggressive reds bleed into fluorescent pinks. One’s eye meditates on this unapologetic celebration of digital colour, a hexadecimal testimony that encodes the full spectrum of colours endless possibilities - remixed and reassembled by every digital creative that follows McCoy’s first steps into the world of blockchain based art.

Beyond their formal concerns, there is a musicality to Quantum. As pixels iteratively jostle for position and color as they execute their algorithmic form, extends through to ideas expressed by John Cage around the nature of rehearsal, execution and repetition. To Cage, 4’ 33’ was a different score every time, reflecting the environment and subtleties of the audience’s

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#).

Pauline Oliveros. It was here that McCoy learnt to develop his creative coding as a form of musical play, using real time live systems to test, or tune, as he has discussed. This sense of tuning a visual artwork through code finds commonality with the conceptual musical experiments of LaMonte Young's *Composition #7*, held in the MOMA's collection.

La Monte Young - Composition 1960 No. 7 (excerpt 1961)



La Monte Young, *Composition 1960 No. 7* (excerpt 1961)

In the work, Young finds a note and then once played its reverberates out as a single entity. Young's thoughts of the conflict of flux versus stasis, act as a manifesto for the formal visual tropes expressed in *Quantum*. "Change or flux is inevitable" Young wrote, "Stasis, or remaining the same, is impossible. Therefore, to achieve the static state is the goal, while the state of flux, variation, or contrast, is unavoidable and thus unnecessary as a goal." *Quantum*, formatted in endless looping repetition is work both in the stasis of its originality but the flux of its repetition. The GIF file format stands as the ultimate standard bearer for the ideas so elegantly expressed by Young

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#).

in direct conversation with the idea of the NFT themselves. In thinking of Quantum as a type of tuning, its final form minted on Namecoin stands not as the experience proper, but the record of that experience, further drawing parallels between the work itself and the core principles of the blockchain. While code equals flux, records equal stasis. There is a comi-tragic nature to this idea of freezing flux, an idea expressed elegantly in both the writings of Cage and that other conceptual touchstone that NFTs are starting to reexamine, Walter Benjamin. The blockchain as a decentralised clock is limited to seeing time in the rear view mirror, it is not a clock of the future but an archive of the past. In his 1940 essay, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", Benjamin discusses the idea of a Paul Klee painting named *Angelus Novus*,

"looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise....The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress"



By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#).



SOL LEWITT, WALL DRAWING #1111 CIRCLE WITH BROKEN BANDS OF COLOR, 2003, PRIVATE COLLECTION © THE LEWITT ESTATE / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

In surveying the past as a sum of actions seen from the last link in the chain, what other of art history's chains does Quantum fork out from? Any discussion around the generative ideas inherent to Quantum, as in most code based art, must link back to Sol LeWitt's instruction-based art. The minimal simplicity of Quantum's formal aesthetic borrows as much from America's history of minimalist music as it does to the ideas of LeWitt in whose work one can easily see how the permutations of instructions create new formal compositions. LeWitt's instructional drawings, John's Target

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#).

music what of literature: in discussions with McCoy it is revealing to note

that the emanating, mesmerizing, light source was to him inspired by the work of science fiction writers like Philip K. Dick and Stanislaw Lem.

JOHN WHITNEY Permutations



John Whitney - *Permutations*, 1968

In Philip K. Dick's novel, *VALIS* (or Vast Active Living Intelligence System), the main character sees history as a simultaneous event as communicated through a mysterious pink light. Earlier works by Jennifer and Kevin McCoy that engage with this idea include *Pink Light* from 2001 and both *Priests of the Temple* and *Chysalis* from 2012. In *Pink Light*, the McCoy's quote passages from the novel as a pink light blinks through the doors of a miniature elevator. In *Priests of the Temple* a yellow pulsating sun is overlaid onto projected images of sculptures depicting Gordon Moore as an early Silicon Valley holy man. *Chysalis* employs the same pulsing star projected over a sculpture of a building that is hatching from an amorphous rubbery skin. This is a trope that the McCoy's have turned to time and time again; it is deeply embedded in their artistic lexicon and now into the history.

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated [Privacy Policy](#).

enlightenment philosophers back to the star of Bethlehem. The beams of Quantum, and the conceptual maneuver to fix its own “coming into being” into the record of the blockchain, represents the chronicling of the birth of ideas themselves into the record of human activity.

— ROBERT ALICE

Cited in Free Holdings Inc v McCoy
22CV881 Decided 3/17/23
Archived on 3/23/23
This document is protected by copyright.
Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

By continuing to use our Site, you consent to our use of cookies and to the practices described in our updated
Privacy Policy.